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March 11, 2014 Minutes

Park and Recreation Commission

Minutes

Tuesday, March 11, 2014 @ 7:00 PM

Approved

The Park and Recreation Commission came to order at 7:10 PM in the Upstairs Main Room of the Arlington Senior Center on Tuesday, March 11, 2014.

Members in attendance included: Leslie Mayer, Shirley Canniff, Jim Robillard, Jen Rothenberg and Peter Hedlund. Also in attendance was Director of Recreation, Joseph Connelly.

Members from the public: Ben Wall and representatives from the Arlington Men's Softball organization, Adria Arch and Niloufer Mochhala.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Canniff motioned to approve the minutes of February 11, 2014; Ms. Rothenberg seconded and approved 4-0.

Open Forum – Public Comments

No public comments.

Arlington Men's Softball Season Preview

Mr. Wall reviewed the upcoming season with the Commission and shared the success of his meeting with this year's teams. Mr. Connelly and Ms. Mayer reviewed some of the issues from past years and stated that last year did go a lot smoother. It is hoped that this will continue for the participants and the community. Members of the league introduced themselves to the Commission and shared their positive experiences with the league. Mr. Connelly stated that the key to a successful league was for the league members to police themselves and teams are encouraged to report any field issues to Mr. Connelly. Mr. Wall agreed and stated that he was looking forward to the coming year. The Commission thanked the league members and Mr. Wall for attending and wished them well for the upcoming season.

Art Rocks Menotomy Display Approval

Ms. Arch reviewed the recommendations for the Art Rocks Menotomy park displays for the inaugural event that will run from Saturday, May 3 – Monday, May 26, 2014. Ms. Arch stated that there were twelve original entries but one artist dropped out. Ms. Arch also reviewed the suggested locations in the park for each entry.

The Commission reviewed the recommendations from the Public Art Committee. The Commission and Ms. Arch decided to eliminate one entry due to safety concerns, but were impressed and excited by the proposed works overall.

Ms. Arch and Mr. Connelly reviewed the opening of the event and details regarding the supervision of the art. This is an all weather event, as the pieces will be exhibited in the open over a period of time, so it was recommended that the opening reception be held rain or shine.

Ms. Rothenberg motioned to approve the entries with the one deletion, seconded by Ms. Canniff and approved 4-0.

Robbins Farm Sledding

Mr. Connelly reviewed the latest correspondence between the Friends of Robbins Farm and Town Counsel with regard to signage at the park for sledding. Mr. Hedlund again reviewed his concerns with not posting appropriate warnings at "suicide hill". Mr. Connelly explained that the current Town Counsel, as well as the previous two Town Counsels, advised against posting warning signs or assumption of risk signs. Ms. Rothenberg stated that there must be something we could do as a Commission. Mr. Connelly will again talk to Town Counsel. Ms. Mayer suggested that the PTO could point out the danger in the school newsletter or that the Commission could consider physical changes to the park.

The Commission asked Mr. Connelly to talk to Town Counsel about the skate at your own risk sign at Hills Pond and its potential removal to be consistent with the other parks.

The Commission did discuss the potential of planting shrubbery or a small natural buffer at the bottom of the hill to change the natural landscape and potentially slow down any sledgers before the fence/timber area. Mr. Hedlund will draft a planting plan for the area.

CPA Warrant Article Review

The Commission discussed the CPA warrant article. Ms. Rothenberg reviewed possible projects that could be funded by CPA and the literature proponents created. The Commission discussed concerns about the potential loss of capital funding, the fund allocation process and the lack of support for the article by the Finance Committee. The Commission agreed that any additional funding for open space and recreation projects would be a positive outcome, but does not want to jeopardize the current capital process. The Commission asked Mr. Connelly to seek information from surrounding communities that have adopted the CPA. Ms. Rothenberg will share the concerns of the Commission with the article proponents and try to gather more information.

The Commission discussed the appropriateness of taking a vote at this time. The Commission stated that they needed more information before taking the issue up for a vote. Ms. Mayer would like the full Commission present.

Capital Improvement Project Update

Hibbert Park and North Union Spray Pool – Mr. Connelly reviewed the bid results for the North Union Spray Pool and Hibbert Park projects. Mr. Connelly stated that the low bidder was JNJ Saccia of Arlington, MA., and that the budget can support the base bid plus alternates 1-4, with a contingency of \$10,000. Both projects will be done this spring/summer.

Special Event Requests

Ottoson Middle School – Team Works Festival – This is the second year of a successful event that was held last year at Summer St. Field. The Commission expressed concern over the lack of restroom facilities for 400 students at Thorndike Field for an entire day, and before voting on the request asked Mr. Connelly to touch base with Ottoson staff regarding the plan for restrooms.

Merli Guerra – Dance Company Event – The Commission had some concerns about this event, as described, at the Water Tower on Park Ave. The Commission asked Mr. Connelly to have the requestor attend a future meeting to answer questions, and because of the projected number of attendees and the proximity of the event to a high traffic intersection, bus route and the fire station, to have a safety plan approved by Arlington Police and Fire Departments.

Commission Liaison Reports

Friends of Park/Special Event Fundraising – Ms. Rothenberg and Mr. Connelly reviewed the information from the last Friends of Parks meeting and from a meeting with APD safety officer Corey Rateau about a possible event at the Reservoir. Ms. Rothenberg stated that the first step was to revisit the mission statement of the group. Ms. Rothenberg and Mr. Connelly will report back to the Commission, when more information is available.

Open Space Committee - Ms. Mayer reviewed the Vision 2020 survey questions/responses and will forward them for the Commission to review. Sections of the Open Space Plan also need review by the Commission for the update.

Town Master Plan – Mr. Connelly reviewed the material sent to Planning from his office for revisions to the Public Services/Facilities Working Paper for the Master Plan. Ms. Mayer noted that there will also be a working paper related to open space and recreation that is scheduled to be published in early May that the Commissioners should plan to review.

Other

Recreation Brochure – Ms. Rothenberg discussed the 2014 spring/summer brochure and asked about the policy for advertising non-Arlington Recreation programs. Mr. Connelly stated that he used his own judgment but for future brochures will advertise only Arlington Recreation programs.

Waldo Tree Donation – Mr. Connelly stated that he did talk to Mr. Bill Reilly about the generous donation from Mr. MacEachern for Waldo Park. Mr. Reilly will contact Mr. Connelly after discussions with the Friends of Waldo regarding the donation, so that the Commission can review the plan.

Meeting Room Space and Time – Mr. Connelly will attempt to secure a permanent room of adequate size downstairs in the Senior Center for all future Commission meetings beginning at 7 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Joseph Connelly, Director of Recreation